REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-13, 16-18, 20-21, 23-24, and 26-27 are now pending in the application. Claims 2, 14, 15, 19, 22, 25, 28 and 29 have been cancelled. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, should not be considered as narrowing amendments. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2-4, 19-22 and 25-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that locked data inputs are inputs that the user or another computer program may not override. Locked parameters are input parameters calculated internally using smart defaults. Therefore, Applicants believe that this type of input is enabled by the disclosure at paragraph 35 of the application. As such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 1, 3-13, 16-18, 20-21, 23-24, and 26-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101. Applicants have amended claims 1, 12, 18 and 23 to comply with §101 by including the Examiner's recommendation of "executing on a computer readable medium." As such,

Applicants believe that this rejection has been overcome.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND §103

Claims 1, 3-4 and 7-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Template Software's programming environment "SNAP" (hereinafter "SNAP"). Claims 5-7, 16-18, 20-21, 23-24 and 26-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over SNAP in view of Visual C++. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicants note that SNAP is a programming language that provides general purpose inference engine capabilities. The present invention is not a programming language per se, but rather a system, method and architecture for creating robust and flexible interfaces for computer programs.

Claim 1 has been amended to further distinguish between the features of the present invention and those of the SNAP programming language. Claim 1 now includes required data inputs, optional data inputs and locked data inputs. Specifically, claim 1 now claims "performing a first set of predetermined functions to calculate data input values for non-specified optional data inputs," "performing a second set of predetermined functions to calculate data values for locked parameters that the at least one of users and upstream computer programs are prohibited from altering" and "performing the calculations without needing to predefine an order of calculation." Claims 12, 18 and 23 have been similarly amended to distinguish between the present invention and SNAP. The Examiner will note that SNAP does not have the notion of parameter types. SNAP appears to be merely a programming language that provides a

general purpose inference engine that gives the programmer the ability to create classes, attributes and knowledge sources. The present invention introduces the notion of three parameter types. These include required inputs, optional inputs and locked inputs. A parameter in the present invention can be flagged as any one of the three input types, causing the software to prompt the user for the parameter value when it has not already been provided by the user or controlling software. Optional data inputs are computed if no value is specified by the user. Locked data inputs are calculated and cannot be overridden by the user. SNAP does appear to include these features. SNAP has attributes which have no pre-defined roles. Therefore, each role must be specifically programmed into a module. The present invention automatically knows how to handle any parameter without any coding by the developer who is creating the interface due to the parameter types provided by the present invention.

Claim 1 has been further amended to include the functionality of the smart defaults of the present invention. Claim 1 now includes the functionality of "structuring said predetermined functions to include at least one of conditional statements, loops, references to other parameters, function calls, execution of external software code, numeric expressions and constant values." Claims 12, 18 and 23 have been similarly amended to include the functionality of the smart defaults of the present invention. SNAP appears to limit its defaults to the assignment of constant values or simple numeric expressions (SNAP pgs. 6-20, 21). The present invention allows the use of conditional statements, loops and the execution of external software code as well as constant values and simple numeric expressions. Smart defaults exist for all parameters that are defined as being locked or optional. SNAP does not make a distinction between

these two parameter types and therefore would have to explicitly program the functionality of these parameter types into their knowledge classes/rules.

The Examiner has previously noted that the portion of claim 1 stating "wherein the calculations are performed independent of the order of the data inputs" has been admitted as prior art. Claim 1 has been amended to replace this statement with "wherein the calculations are performed without needing to predefine an order of calculation" in order to further clarify the claim. Claims 12, 18 and 23 include similar amendments.

Applicants submit that the pending claims are novel and non-obvious, and further that the system and method claimed satisfies a long-felt need in the art.

Applicants note that claims 3-11 depend from claim 1. Claims 13, 16 and 17 depend from claim 12. Claims 20 and 21 depend from claim 18. Claims 24, 26 and 27 depend from claim 23. Thus, Applicants assert that these claims are in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above regarding claims 1, 12 18 and 23. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the prior art rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt

and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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